DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 441 660 SE 063 372

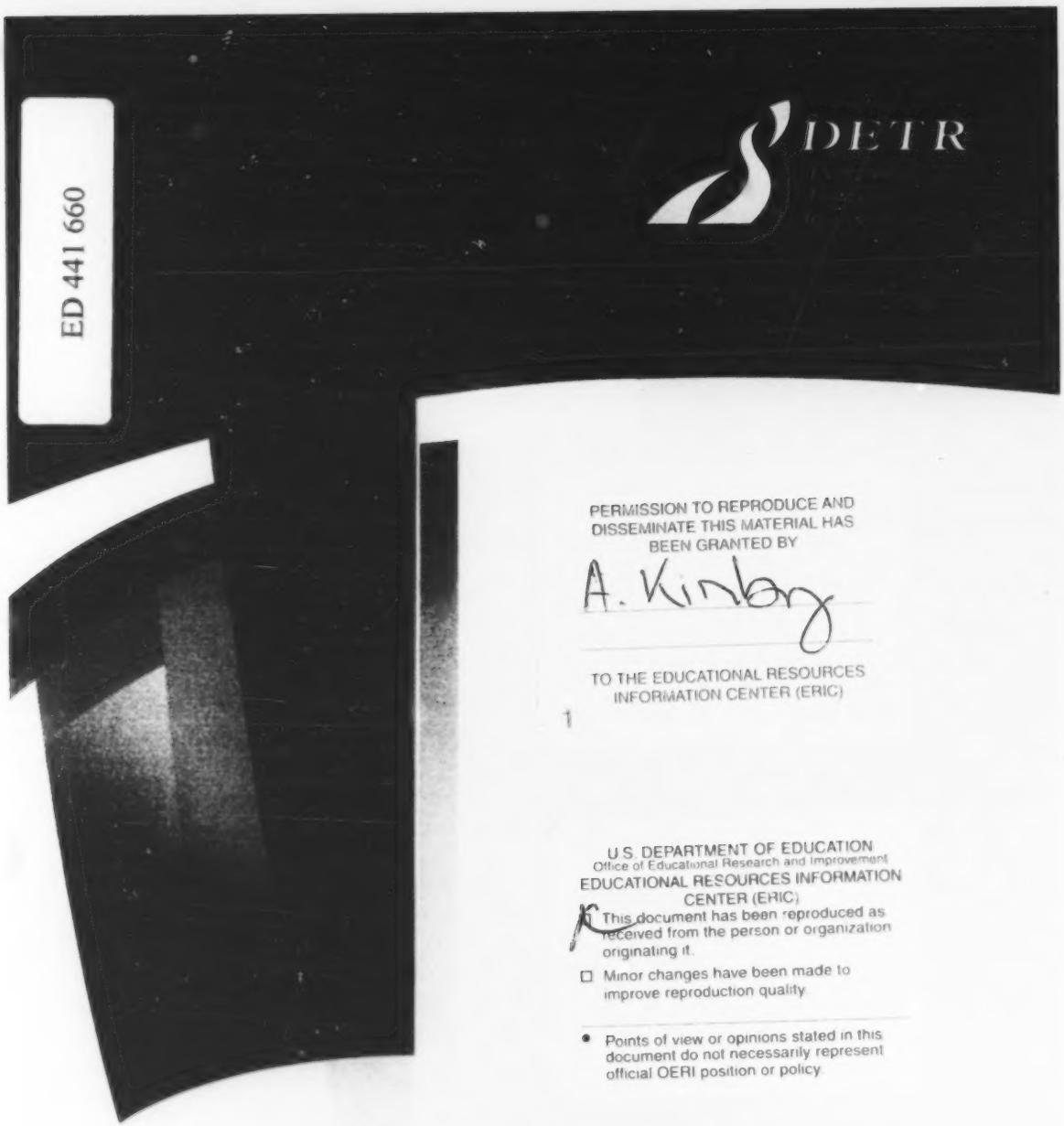
| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE | Supporting Sustainable Development through Educational Resources: A Voluntary Code of Practice. |
| INSTITUTION | Council for Environmental Education, London (England). |
| SPONS AGENCY | Department for Education and Employment, London (England).; Department of the Environment, Transport, and the Regions, London (England). |
| PUB DATE | 1999-00-00 |
| NOTE | 17p.; For related booklet on sustainable development, see SE 063 373. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | Dept. of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, P.O. Box 236, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 7NB (Product Code, 99EP0500B). For full text: http://www.environment.detr.gov.uk/sustainable/educpanel/index.htm. |
| PUB TYPE | Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC01 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Environmental Education; Higher Education; *Resource Materials; Science Education; *Sustainable Development |

ABSTRACT

The aim of this document is to raise the standards of educational resources designed to support education for sustainable development. In achieving this goal, the Code of Practice has two underlying objectives: (1) to promote and disseminate good practice in the development and production of resources relating to education for sustainable development; and (2) to raise the status of the role of education in achieving the move towards sustainability. This guide sets forth 10 principles of good practice for the development and production of educational resources. Each principle is supported by a number of guidance statements that exemplify good practice and represent the means by which these principles can be achieved. (CCM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 441 660



PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

A. Kirby

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

# SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

## A VOLUNTARY CODE OF PRACTICE

Council for Environmental Education/ Department for Education and Employment/ Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions

D/EE
Department for Education and Employment

2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# Acknowledgements

The authors of this Code wish to acknowledge all those who made comments or gave advice to the Working Group or otherwise contributed to the development of this voluntary Code of Practice

**Working group members**

| | |
|---|---|
| John Lawrence | Association for Science Education |
| Miranda Stephenson | Chemical Industry Education Centre |
| Margaret Atherton | Consumers Association |
| Andy Breckon | Design and Technology Association |
| Scott Sinclair | Development Education Association/Birmingham Development Education Centre |
| Caroline Mardall | Educational Publishers' Council/Oxford University Press |
| Derrick Golland | Environmental Education Advisers Association /Staffordshire, Quality Learning Services |
| Martin Tims | Esso UK plc |
| Steve Tilling | Field Studies Council |
| John Baines | Geographical Association |
| Tony Pearce | Hampshire County Council, Education Department |
| Julian Morris | Institute of Economic Affairs |
| Jon Somper | International Centre for Conservation Education |
| David Brinn | National Association for Environmental Education/ Brecon Beacons National Park |
| Diana Whitworth | National Consumer Council |
| David Hassell | British Educational Communications and Technology Agency |
| Gareth Binns (Chair) | National Trust |
| Andy Simpson | Royal Society for the Protection of Birds |
| Peter Martin | WWF-UK (World Wide Fund for Nature - UK) |

**observers**

| | |
|---|---|
| Gill Beauchamp | Department for Education and Employment |
| Helen Morris | Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions |
| Peter Smith HMI | OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) |
| John Westaway | Qualifications and Curriculum Authority |

**CEE staff**

| | |
|---|---|
| Libby Grundy | Director |
| Christine Midgley | Head of Information |

# Contents


| | |
|---|---|
| **Introduction** | **2** |
| Sustainable development and education | 2 |
| Purpose of the Code of Practice | 3 |
| Development of the Code of Practice | 4 |
| Status of the Code of Practice | 5 |
| **The Code of Practice** | **6** |
| Ten principles of good practice | 6 |
| **Guidance statements** | **7** |
| **Demonstrating use of the code** | **10** |
| **Glossary and background** | **11** |
| **References** | **12** |
| **Sustainable development : producer's statement** | **13** |

# Introduction

**Sustainable development and education**

It is generally agreed that education is a key factor in the transition towards more sustainable ways of living; the implications for education itself are therefore far reaching. *Agenda 21* speaks of:

> *"...nothing less than the complete reorientation of education towards sustainable development."*

Defining the type of education that is necessary to support the move to a more sustainable society is no easy task. *Good earth-keeping* describes education for sustainability as a process which:

- enables people to understand the interdependence of all life, and the repercussions of their actions and decisions, now and in the future, globally as well as locally;
- increases people's awareness of the economic, political, social, cultural, technological and environmental forces which foster or impede sustainable development;
- develops people's awareness, competence, attitudes and values, enabling them to be effectively involved in sustainable development at local, national and international level, and to work towards a more equitable and sustainable future.

The production of good educational resources can make an important contribution to these goals. By educational resources we mean any educational materials, printed or otherwise (e.g. videos, computer programmes, websites etc.) which are designed to raise understanding of and involvement in sustainable development issues. While there is much evidence of good practice in the development of such resources, there has also been widely expressed concern about the quality and suitability of some educational material dealing with environmental and development issues.

This voluntary Code of Practice has been developed by producers and others in the field to meet this concern.

**Purpose of the Code of Practice**

The main aim of the code is:

- to raise standards of educational resources designed to support education for sustainable development.

In achieving this aim, the Code of Practice has two underlying objectives:

- to promote and disseminate good practice in the development and production of resources relating to education for sustainable development;
- to raise the status of the role of education in achieving the move towards sustainability.

These objectives take account of the importance attributed to education by the Sustainable Development Educational Panel in achieving sustainable goals.

> *"Education for sustainable development is about the learning needed to maintain and improve our quality of life and the quality of life for generations to come. It is about equipping individuals, communities, groups, businesses and government to live and act sustainably; as well as giving them an understanding of the environmental, social and economic issues involved. It is about preparing for the world in which we will live in the next century, and making sure that we are not found wanting".*
> ***Sustainable Development Education Panel First Annual Report 1998, page 4***

The Code of Practice sets out ***ten principles of good practice*** for the development and production of educational resources. Each principle is supported by a number of ***guidance*** statements which exemplify good practice and which represent means by which the principles can be achieved. The guidance is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive (see *Status of the Code* on page 5).

**Development of the Code of Practice**

The Code of Practice has been developed by the Council for Environmental Education (CEE) in consultation with producers and users of educational resources, under the guidance of an expert Working Group. The development process has also included input from focus groups drawn from teachers and other educators in Lincolnshire and Staffordshire, and representatives of the Faculty of Education and Community Studies at the University of Reading.

During the development of the code, the members of the Working Group had to address at length the complex issues of bias and balance, acknowledging the inherent nature of bias in any resources, including the present document, which aim to bring about change. The group also had to tackle the difficult issue of education *for* sustainable development, that is, whether it is valid to take an educational stance which actively promotes a particular outcome, that of sustainability. After much debate, it was felt that such an approach was valid in the light of concerns about the current and projected state of ecosystems and their continued ability to support both human and non-human life. Education that promotes sustainable development is also stated Government policy and endorsed by international agreements. It is clearly part of the education process itself, however, to discuss and develop ideas about *how* sustainable futures can be ensured.

The Code of Practice is not an all-inclusive document. It is recognised that it cannot be applied equally to all resources and that there must be a degree of flexibility and common sense in its interpretation. It is also not a guide to producing resources as such; other publications do this in more detail (see *References*). Rather it is intended to focus producers on matters to do with sustainable development in terms of both the production process and content of resources. In this intention, the Working Group experienced some difficulty in distinguishing between sustainable development issues and issues that are generic to all well-produced resources. However, it is considered that many generic issues, such as the need to demonstrate a market, effective trialling and evaluation, are, in the broadest sense, issues of sustainability since they involve the efficient and effective production, selection and use of educational material.

**Status of the Code of Practice**

The issue of the status of the Code of Practice was actively debated by the Working Group, including the use of the term itself. The view taken here is that this is a voluntary code, developed by the field for the field and, as such, designed to raise standards in this area. **Organisations adopting the code commit themselves to its ten principles and to working towards their attainment.** It is therefore acknowledged that the principles represent an aim or ideal, rather than a specific end point. The accompanying guidance statements may be seen as *indicators* to help producers prioritise, improve and evaluate their own performance against the principles. For example, it is recognised that life cycle analysis is a difficult and complex process, areas of which may be outside the control of the producer. However, this should not deter producers from investigating alternative practices, learning from others and making improvements.

It is intended that resources carrying reference to the code should clearly demonstrate the basis on which sustainable principles have been incorporated into the development and production processes. This can then inform and reassure users that the materials they use actually 'practise what they preach' *(see Demonstrating use of the code).*

The Code of Practice is designed to be self-regulating. However, if standards are to be raised further, some form of periodic monitoring is desirable and this will be the subject of further discussion within the field.

# The Code of Practice

**Ten principles of good practice**

The ten principles are set out below. They are numbered for ease of reference but this does not imply a hierarchical order. To aid application, the principles have been grouped under 'content' (what resources contain) and 'process' (how they have been developed).

## content

**PRINCIPLE 1**: Principles of sustainable development

Resources should foster understanding of the principles of sustainable development and the aims and significance of Agenda 21.

**PRINCIPLE 2**: Integrity

Any information and data provided should be accurate, current and verifiable.

**PRINCIPLE 3**: Balance

When purporting to give a balanced account of an issue, resources should accurately reflect the broad range of informed opinion on the subject.

**PRINCIPLE 4**: Values and attitudes

Resources should help people to explore values and develop responsible attitudes in relation to their fellow citizens and the environment, from local to global level.

**PRINCIPLE 5**: Knowledge and skills

In addressing environmental and development issues, resources should help develop the knowledge, skills and competencies to enable people to participate effectively in their resolution.

**PRINCIPLE 6**: User-centred approach

To ensure maximum take-up, resources should be easy to use and appropriate for the intended audience.

## process

**PRINCIPLE 7**: Need

Producers should be able to demonstrate there is an identified need for the proposed resource.

**PRINCIPLE 8**: Development

Producers should ensure that the development of the resource is inclusive, participative and has drawn on appropriate educational expertise.

**PRINCIPLE 9**: Production

Producers should demonstrate that the production process has followed best sustainable practice wherever possible.

**PRINCIPLE 10**: Promotion and distribution

Producers should consider the implications of promotion and distribution from the outset and ensure that they are effective, appropriate and accessible.

# Guidance statements

The guidance statements which follow illustrate how the ten principles might be achieved.

**PRINCIPLE 1: PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

***Resources should foster understanding of the principles of sustainable development and the aims and significance of Agenda 21.***

*Guidance*

- emphasise the links between environmental, economic, social, political and cultural processes (for example, the complex relationship between human rights, poverty and the ownership of land);
- draw from a wide variety of situations and experiences (for example, using local case studies from a variety of cultures);
- demonstrate the relevance of global issues to the learner's own life and community, including ways in which individual actions and decisions impact on other people and the environment at all levels;
- provide experience/awareness of democratic processes and encourage participation in decision making and action;
- encourage involvement with the local community and in the Local Agenda 21 process.

**PRINCIPLE 2: INTEGRITY**

***Any information and data provided should be accurate, current and verifiable.***

*Guidance*

- state the source and date of any information or data cited or drawn on;
- make clear distinctions between opinions, facts and interpretation of evidence;
- make it clear that we are only ever dealing with partial information and uncertainties, as new knowledge and understanding constantly arise.

**PRINCIPLE 3: BALANCE**

***When purporting to give a balanced account of an issue, resources should accurately reflect the broad range of informed opinion on the subject.***

*Guidance*

- acknowledge that all materials contain inherent bias of some kind and that it is the role of the educator to draw on a range of resources and present balanced learning programmes;
- acknowledge that there may be a range of views on and solutions to controversial issues;
- present a balance of differing views where these are legitimate; in doing so, consider working in partnership with, or consulting, bodies holding alternative viewpoints;
- where a balanced view is *not* being given, make this explicit and clearly acknowledge the existence of other views (for example, through appropriate references);
- be aware that an inappropriate image can undermine balanced text;
- clearly state the identities and credentials of writers, producers or sponsors;
- ensure that any sponsor's influence is contained by the guidance offered in *Sponsorship in schools: good practice guidelines* (National Consumer Council 1996).

**PRINCIPLE 4: VALUES AND ATTITUDES**

***Resources should help people to explore values and develop responsible attitudes in relation to their fellow citizens and the environment, from local to global level.***

*Guidance*

- provide opportunities for learners to investigate their own values and understand how these affect perceptions, decisions and actions in relation to the environment and other people;
- help people to explore their own attitudes to and relationship with their environment;
- use opportunities to celebrate rather than concentrating on alarmist or doom-laden views;
- reflect and present the needs and values of different groups, avoiding stereotypes and combating prejudice.

**PRINCIPLE 5: KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS**

***In addressing environmental and development issues, resources should help develop the knowledge, skills and competencies to enable people to participate effectively in their resolution.***

*Guidance*

- provide opportunities for the learner to develop critical thinking, handle bias and make informed decisions about sustainable development issues;
- encourage an open mind and a creative approach to problem solving;
- support the development of a range of competencies enabling learners to become more effective in bringing about change;
- offer experiences which develop communication and partnership skills.

**PRINCIPLE 6: USER-CENTRED APPROACH**

***To ensure maximum take-up, resources should be easy to use and appropriate for the intended audience.***

*Guidance*

- allow for flexible use and a range of teaching and learning styles (for example, include extension or alternative activities);
- where appropriate, state relevance to curricula or qualifications, the intended learning outcomes and how these can be evaluated;
- facilitate ease of use by good layout, clear presentation and attractive format;
- include sources of further information and support, clearly indicating the nature of the support available.

**PRINCIPLE 7: NEED**

***Producers should be able to demonstrate there is an identified need for the proposed resource.***

*Guidance*

- carry out market research or consult independent, specialist body (for example, Council for Environmental Education or Development Education Association);
- avoid duplication; demonstrate how the resource complements or adds value to existing resources;
- if no clear need is established, be prepared to abandon or extensively modify plans;
- determine whether any other organisations have similar plans; if so, explore possibility of partnership;
- clearly state the intended usage and target audience of the resource.

**PRINCIPLE 8: DEVELOPMENT**

***Producers should ensure that the development of the resource is inclusive, participative and has drawn on appropriate educational expertise.***

*Guidance*

- involve representatives of the intended audience in the development and trialling process (in some circumstances it may also be appropriate to involve groups or individuals featured in the resource);
- use experienced writers and developers, familiar with the needs of the audience; consider encouraging new contributors where it is possible to offer experienced editorial support;
- identify the most appropriate medium and format for the resource and use the medium appropriately (for example, electronic resources should allow the user to interact with information in a way not open to printed resources);
- view the development process as an important learning experience for those involved.

**PRINCIPLE 9: PRODUCTION**

***Producers should demonstrate that the production process has followed best sustainable practice wherever possible.***

*Guidance*

- consider ways of minimising the environmental impact of the resource throughout its life-cycle;
- identify whether suppliers, such as printers and designers, are addressing sustainability issues, asking for evidence such as achievement of standards and appropriate policies;
- avoid over-reliance on the need to photocopy;
- ensure that the materials used are appropriate for the intended use and lifespan (for example, resources for outside use will need to be more robust; consider whether size is appropriate for most use and storage);
- consider mechanisms for prolonging the life of the resource (for example, updates and inserts);
- include an evaluation form or other method of obtaining feedback and be prepared to analyse responses and modify approaches accordingly.

**PRINCIPLE 10: PROMOTION AND DISTRIBUTION**

***Producers should consider the implications of promotion and distribution methods from the outset and ensure that they are effective, appropriate and accessible to all potential users.***

*Guidance*

- acknowledge that 'free' does not necessarily equate with good value; resources provided at nominal or reasonable price may be more valued than those provided free of charge;
- where free, encourage requests for copies rather than sending unsolicited material; consider advantages of information outlets (newsheets/Internet) rather than mass mailings of fliers;
- allow for costs of review and inspection copies and appropriate promotional material;
- where possible, make inspection copies available direct to users or at information points; consider alternatives such as samples and demonstrations, training and familiarisation sessions etc.;
- send copyright deposit copies to the British Library and a review copy to the Council for Environmental Education or the Development Education Association;
- give clear and detailed information about the resource, including information demonstrating how this Code of Practice has been followed (see *Demonstrating use of the code*, below).

# Demonstrating use of the code

If the Code of Practice is to be effective, it is important that information about resources is communicated effectively to potential users. The view taken here is that it is **the primary responsibility of producers to demonstrate to users that sustainable development principles have been addressed,** both in terms of content and process. In other words producers need to demonstrate that the resource has been produced in accordance with the principles of the Code of Practice and be prepared to offer evidence to support this claim. This does not, of course, take responsibility away from the user since there will always be an onus on educators to select resources wisely and verify any claims made about them.

A suggested *producer's statement*, demonstrating that good practice in resource development and production has been followed, is given at the end of this document. The example is based on the current publication. The suggested format is not intended to be prescriptive since different resources may require slightly different approaches. However, if users are to be enabled to obtain information relating to the Code of Practice, a recognisable format and easy access to that information is required. Producers may wish to consider the application of the *producer's statement* to promotional material as well as the resource itself.

The practicability and desirability of producing guidelines for potential users of educational resources in relation to sustainable development has also been considered. The conclusion reached is that users require guidance which **promotes understanding and critical use of information provided by producers,** rather than another set of guidelines as such. A parallel document, *Sustainable development: a guide to selecting educational resources*, which explains the Code of Practice, has therefore been produced.

# Glossary and background

**Sustainable development**
is a process rather than a fixed goal. It is most commonly defined by the phrase used by the Brundtland Commission in 1987: "Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Another useful definition, adopted jointly in 1991 by IUCN - The World Conservation Union, the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Wide Fund for Nature, is: "Sustainable development means improving the quality of life whilst living within the carrying capacity of the supporting ecosystem". It is a complex concept, involving social justice, equity and concern for the future, as well as environmental and development issues.

The crucial role of education in achieving the move towards a more sustainable way of life is being addressed within the UK's sustainable development strategy, initially developed in response to Agenda 21. A Sustainable Development Education Panel, set up by the Government in 1998, reports directly to the respective Secretaries of State for Education and Employment and the Environment, Transport and the Regions. The Panel is currently developing definitions and agreed learning outcomes and is also influencing the review of the school curriculum.

**Agenda 21**
is the blueprint for sustainable development agreed by 180 of the world's leaders at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. It stresses the importance of involving all sectors of the community in order to move towards more sustainable ways of life and calls for local authorities to develop Local Agenda 21 strategies, in collaboration with their communities.

**Local Agenda 21**
is the process of developing local strategies for sustainable development. Agenda 21 requires local authorities to build partnerships between sectors of the community, such as businesses, voluntary groups and young people, to develop a Local Agenda 21 action plan. It is a continuing process and activities, approaches and issues vary according to local priorities and circumstances.

# References


***Agenda 21:*** *programme of action for sustainable development.* United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. New York: United Nations, 1992.

***Caring for the Earth:*** *a strategy for sustainable living.* David A Munro and Martin W Holdgate (editors). Gland, Switzerland: IUCN - The World Conservation Union/United Nations Environment Programme/World Wide Fund for Nature, 1991.

***Education for sustainability.*** John Huckle and Stephen Sterling (editors). London: Earthscan, 1996.

*First* ***annual report 1998.*** Sustainable Development Educational Panel. London: Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, 1999.

***Good earth-keeping:*** *education, training and awareness for a sustainable future.* Environment and Development Education and Training Group. London: United Nations Environment Programme - UK Committee, 1992.

***Guidelines on producing development education resources.*** Chris Mason. London: Development Education Association, 1998.

***Guidelines on the preparation and evaluation of curricular resources.*** Common Agenda Workshop Planning Group. Dundee: Scottish Consultative Council on the Curriculum, 1998.

***Our common future.*** World Commission on Environment and Development (Chair: Gro Harlem Brundtland). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

***Sponsorship in schools:*** *good practice guidelines.* National Consumer Council. London: National Consumer Council, 1996.

# Sustainable development - producer's statement

This resource has been developed in accordance with the principles set out in *Supporting sustainable development through educational resources: a voluntary code of practice.*

**Title of resource**
*Supporting sustainable development through educational resources: a voluntary code of practice*

**Summary/contents**
A voluntary Code of Practice aimed at raising standards in the development and production of educational resources produced to support sustainable development. Contents include:

- background and rationale to the code;
- information on recent developments in relation to sustainable development and education;
- discussion of issues including bias and the validity of education for sustainable development;
- status and application of the code;
- ten principles of good practice and guidance on achieving them;
- glossary and references.

**Target audience and intended usage**
Aimed at producers, authors and sponsors of educational resources, not only in the voluntary sector but also commercial and industrial producers, to guide the production of resources in ways that support sustainable development.

**Author/developer**
Council for Environmental Education (CEE) in consultation with CEE's membership and under the guidance of an expert Working Group, under contract to Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. CEE is an independent national organisation, a registered charity, set up to influence policy and promote good practice in environmental education and education for sustainable development.

**How developed/trialled**
A consultation document was sent to 400 organisations and individuals. Over 70 responses were received and analysed. The results of the analysis are contained in a report submitted to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions. Focus groups of teachers in Lincolnshire and Staffordshire were held to gain practical feedback on users' needs and these were used to inform the code and the most appropriate ways of supporting users of resources.

**Publisher/sponsor**
Published and funded by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions.

**Identification of need**
Developed as result of research carried out for CEE by Loughborough University, the work of a CEE resources working group, discussions at a conference in 1995, followed by a feasibility study and general consensus and discussion in the field.

**Materials/processes used in production**
Printed on material containing 75% post-consumer waste and 25% ECF pulp and with Volatile Organic Compound free vegetable based printer's ink

**Promotion and distribution**
Available free on the DETR website (http://www.environment.detr.gov.uk/sustainable/educpanel/index.htm) and limited single copies from the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, PO Box 236, Wetherby, West Yorkshire, LS23 7NB. Tel: 0870 1226 236. Fax: 0870 1226 237. An accompanying 12 page document, *Sustainable development: a guide to selecting educational resources*, is also available.

**Date of production/publication and other details**
November 1999. Printed in London.

© Crown Copyright 1999

Published by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions
Printed in the UK December 1999 on material containing
75% post-consumer waste and 25% ECF pulp.
Product Code 99EP0500B